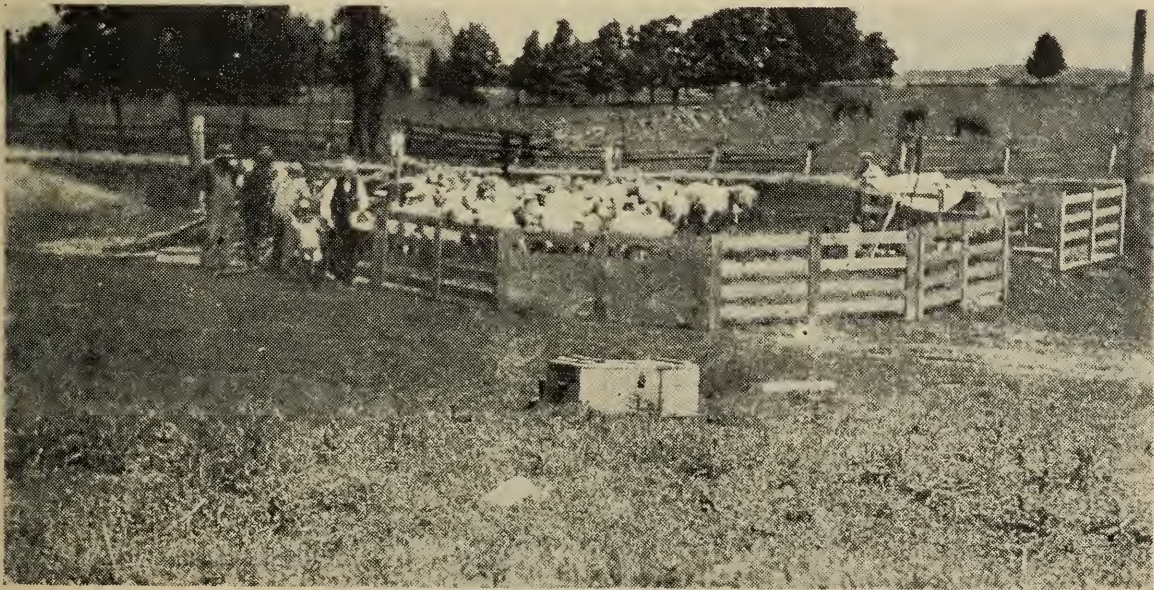


## SHEEP DIPPING

By J. W. GRAHAM

Production Service



Co-operative Dipping of Farm Flocks.

### External Parasites of Sheep

Lice, keds and ticks are common pests of sheep and while not deadly, they cause discomfort, loss of condition and ragged fleeces. The tick, not common in Canada, is the most serious as it can transmit certain blood-borne diseases. It is a part-time parasite usually found on herbage and brush in new grazings and woodlands, not being common to worked land or permanent pastures. It attaches itself to the skin and gorges with blood, then falls off to await another host. Having a life cycle of 3 years, the tick spends only 3 weeks as an active parasite. It also attacks deer, rabbits, dogs, cattle and moose.

It does not stay in the wool of sheep but keeps to bare patches when feeding and is controlled by regular dipping.

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The ked, a brownish spider-like, six legged parasite one-sixth to one-quarter inch in length is often wrongly called a tick in Canada. It is a blood sucker and spends its whole life on the sheep and on no other animal. The female develops larvae within her body, which with their covering are attached to the wool fibre. White when hatched they assume a brown colour. After 21 days the pupae emerge as immature keds and reach sexual maturity in about 4 days. The total life cycle is about 35 days.

The ked causes great discomfort, is a blood sucker, making a new puncture in the skin each time it feeds. Sheep in low condition are usually ked infested and are continually rubbing themselves to get relief. Control is by dipping.

Lice are of two kinds, biting and sucking, and are found on sheep only. Both are controlled by dipping.

### **How and When to Dip**

Power spraying is favoured in some countries and where sheep are ranched in large numbers, this method is a time saver. Sheep are herded into a circular enclosure and subjected to pressure sprays from above, below and sides.

The tank or bath method is used with farm flocks and with simple equipment a good job can be done.

Dips are usually sold in two forms: powder, which is held in suspension in water and so remains in part in the fleece as residue to kill the parasite eggs as they hatch; and liquid, which is readily mixed in solution. All dips should be used at recommended strengths if a thorough job is to be done. Follow directions carefully. Arsenical dips are poisonous and should be kept out of reach of livestock. Lambs should be kept apart from ewes for a few hours after dipping to avoid poisoning from liquid dripping from fleeces.

### **Spring Dipping**

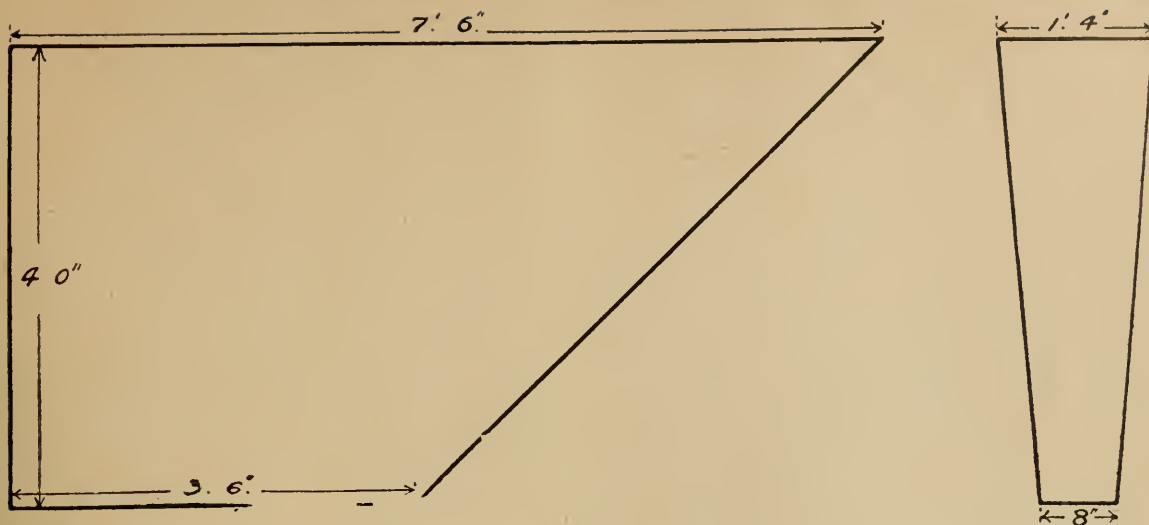
Dipping should be done immediately after shearing, usually in early June. Parasites generally accumulate on the lambs as ewes are dipped, so they too should get attention. Handle the lambs carefully, preferably dipping them by hand to prevent getting liquid down their throats or losses may ensue.

### **Fall Dipping**

Badly infested flocks should be dipped in the fall as well as spring. September is usually a good month for this as the weather is still warm. The use of recommended powders in winter, if parasites are seen, is advocated. By parting the fleece the body can be covered sufficiently to destroy parasites.

### **Equipment**

The type of equipment will depend on flock size. Circular baths accommodate more sheep and the operation is continuous with dripping platforms and foot baths adjacent. For smaller flocks a simply built tank of wood, cement or galvanized iron is useful. A draining platform to allow sheep to drain and so avoid wasting the liquid is easy to build alongside the bath. Plans for a suitable bath are shown below.



### Community Dipping Tanks

In some communities farmers co-operate in the building and use of tanks, thus lessening the costs of operation. For this purpose a concrete tank is advocated, plans of which are available on request. The Livestock Division of Production Service has designed forms and these are available through District Offices in the various provinces.

Material required includes one and one-half yards of gravel, five bags of cement and some barbed wire or similar material for reinforcing at corners. Cement tanks should be built on sloping ground to facilitate drainage and if built with about eighteen inches of the walls above ground level, dipping will be easier to accomplish.






## Penning Equipment

A draining platform with a tight floor and enclosed with hurdles is essential. It will save dip and provide quarters for sheep to drain fluid from their fleeces.

When sheep are penned for dipping, it is a good plan to check over each individual for defective mouths and udders. Feet should be examined and pared if necessary. If there is evidence of foot-rot or lameness every precaution should be taken to effect a cure. Foot-rot if neglected will be most troublesome but if checked early can be readily controlled.

Affected sheep should have their feet trimmed thoroughly, then walked through a foot bath. Copper sulphate solution (1 pound sulphate to 1 gallon water) is effective as is a solution of formalin, 3 fluid ounces to each gallon of water. The foot bath may be 8" wide, 4" deep and 10' long, placed in a passage where the sheep must pass through to the exit. Hurdles are used at the sides to force them into the trough.



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